

ESF COORDINATOR:

Polk County Emergency Management

PRIMARY AGENCIES:

Polk County Health Department
Polk County Community, Family, Youth Services

SUPPORT AGENCIES:

American Red Cross – Central Iowa Chapter
Mass Transit Providers
Des Moines Housing Authority
Easter Seals Iowa
Iowa Department of Human Services
Iowa Department of Public Health – Office of Disability and Health
Jurisdiction impacted building inspection department
Polk County Commission on Veteran's Affairs
Salvation Army
United Way of Central Iowa
Central Iowa Shelter & Services
Bethel Mission

I. Concept of Operations

The successful implementation of Emergency Support Function (ESF) #6: Mass Care will provide life-sustaining and human services to individuals impacted by potential or actual emergencies and/or disasters. Services include:

- Short term sheltering is provided for impacted individuals and households
- Provision of food, hydration, and personal hygiene items to disaster survivors. (Bulk distribution of supplies is addressed in ESF #7 – Resource Support).
- Reunification of unaccompanied minors with custodial parent/legal guardian as well the voluntary reunification of adults with their families is completed.
- Assistance is provided to transition from a shelter to temporary housing until insurance or longer-term public assistance programs are available and implemented
- Evacuees are supported through disaster case management, which may include, but is not limited to client advocacy, unmet needs, and transitional assistance to achieve recovery (see ESF #14 – Mitigation & Recovery).

Polk County Emergency Management identifies six (6) sheltering strategies. At a minimum, the following items need to be assessed to determine the need for shelter activation:

- Cause
- Number of individuals/families displaced
- Duration
- Hotel/Motel room availability
- Monetary impacts of financial assistance for housing vs sheltering

- 1) Personal Sheltering – It is the expectation that individuals have the responsibility to select the most appropriate option for personal sheltering with guidance from the local jurisdiction. Options include shelter-in-place; staying with family, friends, and neighbors; hotel/motel units; and homeless shelters.

- 2) Evacuation Center – Local jurisdictions are expected to identify and establish temporary, safe locations for displaced persons to stay until a shelter can be opened. Few to no services are provided beyond what is normally available in that building. Evacuation Centers are generally operational until the safe travel of shelter staff/evacuees can be assured and transportation can be arranged.
- 3) Extreme Temperature Center (Warming or Cooling) – Local jurisdictions are expected to identify and establish heated and/or air conditioned facilities where persons can temporarily go during periods of extreme temperatures, difficult travel conditions and/or power outages to get out of dangerous weather conditions. Few to no services are provided beyond what is normally available in that building. Extreme Temperature Centers may be open during the facility's normal business hours or hours may be extended depending on the situation and need. Overnight accommodations are not provided. Examples could include malls, libraries, community centers, and senior centers.

The homeless shelters in Polk County offer weather amnesty during periods of extreme temperature for individuals who may not normally be able to seek their services. The details of when weather amnesty is implemented are below:

- Central Iowa Shelter & Services (Adults only): 48 hours prior to and following forecast temperatures of 10°F or below and 90°F or above.
- Bethel Mission (Adult males only): 32° or below and 90° or above

In situations where strategies 1-3 above are inadequate or not appropriate for the situation, Polk County Emergency Management makes the decision to activate and/or demobilize shelters, as well as determine the appropriate shelter strategy in consultation with the jurisdiction(s) needing sheltering services. To ensure maximum resource efficiency, it may be decided that one consolidated shelter be established to serve multiple jurisdictions.

Criteria for determining shelter locations include:

- Facility availability
 - Location of the shelter in proximity to present and potential hazard areas
 - Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and suitability for those with access and functional needs
 - Safe transportation routes to/from the shelter
 - Proximity to public transportation routes
 - Ready availability of showers, alternate power supply, restroom facilities, dining facilities
- 4) County Managed Shelter – Polk County managed shelter with support from Emergency Management and volunteer agencies (i.e., Salvation Army, American Red Cross, faith-based organizations). This includes Warming and Cooling Shelters that are open during overnight hours. These shelters provide services to the sheltered population based on the event. This is the preferred sheltering method in Polk County.

- 5) Medical Shelter – Polk County managed shelter with support from Emergency Management and volunteer agencies. A Medical Shelter is designed to care for people with minor health or medical needs that may require assistance with activities of daily living, professional observation, maintenance and/or assistance with medical treatments including medication administration or dressing changes. The facility should not be used for individuals requiring extensive medical treatment. Those requiring extensive medical treatment should be referred to a hospital or skilled care facility.
- 6) Non-Governmental Shelters – Independently run shelter without governmental support. Must be capable of sustained operations.

II. Local Jurisdiction Responsibilities

- Read and have a basic understanding of ESF #6 – Mass Care & Sheltering plan
- Identify and establish temporary, safe locations for displaced persons to stay until a shelter can be opened
 - Communicate the location to Polk County Emergency Management.
- Identify and establish extreme temperature centers for your community.
 - Communicate the location to Polk County Emergency Management.
- Arrange/coordinate transportation from area(s) of immediate danger to the evacuation center, if resources are available
- Have a local procedure to contact Polk County Emergency Management to request activation of the mass care & shelter plan. Be prepared to answer the following questions as completely as possible
 - Name of requesting agency
 - Name of the Incident Commander
 - Telephone number of the Incident Commander
 - Type of structure or area being evacuated (single or multi-family dwelling)
 - Number of adults and children needed shelter
 - Number and extent of injuries
 - Needs of occupants (sheltering, transportation, financial assistance, clothing, etc.)
 - Occupant's name and telephone number
 - Current location of the occupants
 - Language spoken by the occupants
 - Any other pertinent information

III. Available Resources

Polk County Emergency Management has the following resources available for mass care & sheltering:

- Memorandum of Agreement with facilities countywide for use as emergency shelters
- Shelter supplies
 - Cots (standard, bariatric, medical)
 - Bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, etc)
 - Forms and other office supplies to support shelter operations

This list is not exhaustive. Please contact Polk County Emergency Management should other resources be needed.

IV. Scope

- A. The Polk County Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment identifies numerous hazards that could cause this functional annex to be implemented within Polk County.
- B. Mass Care is the capability to provide emergency sheltering to all persons affected by an incident in the most efficient time possible. This includes persons with access and functional needs. Access and functional needs includes individuals who require medical attention or personal care beyond basic first aid, but under usual circumstances are able to function independently with or without support services. Other access and functional needs populations include those with limited English proficiency, limited transportation, limited education, children and seniors.
- C. Human Services such as food, clothing, childcare, transportation, disaster behavioral mental health services, medication, durable medical equipment, consumable medical equipment and other assistance may be necessary to transition from sheltering to temporary or long term housing.
- D. Sheltering of pets during evacuations or other emergencies is covered in Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11, Agriculture, Natural Resources & Pets.

V. Assumptions and Planning Factors

- A. Regardless of cause, size, or complexity, Polk County and its communities will utilize the processes, protocols, and procedures established through the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS standardizes incident management for all hazards across all levels of government through the use of the Incident Command System.
- B. This annex will be continually in-force and will expand or contract based on level of coordinated support necessary.
- C. Mutual aid and outside resource support will be available to assist the primary and support agencies during most natural or human-caused disasters.

VI. Shelter Organization

- A. Mass Care activities are directed by the Human Services Branch Director
- B. The Human Services Branch reports under the Operations Section
- C. If multiple shelters are opened, they will be designated Divisions with Division Supervisors reporting to the appropriate Group Supervisor (Medical or Accessible)

VII. Activities, Tasks, and Responsibilities

To effectively and efficiently operate a shelter, the following activities and tasks must be accomplished.

A. Management

Assignment: Polk County Community, Family, Youth Services and/or Polk County Health Department.

Activities:

In response to requests made by agencies, provide overall management and coordination of mass care capability

Tasks:

- Activate mass care plan
 - Mass care plans should address medical, accessible general population, access and functional needs and pet care
- Coordinate environmental health assessment of mass care operations
- Conduct initial and ongoing mass care needs assessment
 - Consider need for feeding activities
 - Consider need for sheltering activities
- Supervise day-to-day mass care operations.
 - Oversee feeding activities
 - Oversee sheltering activities
 - Oversee bulk distribution activities
- Coordinate mass care services for access and functional needs populations with appropriate agencies
 - Assign liaison for appropriate agencies
 - Establish contact with appropriate agencies
- Coordinate mass care services for general populations with appropriate agencies
 - Assign liaison for appropriate agencies
 - Establish contact with appropriate agencies
- Ensure communications via alternate formats as necessary
 - Interpreters (Spanish, sign language, etc.)
 - Television with captioning
 - Information technology/computer services
 - Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TTY/TDD)
 - Texting
 - CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Translation)
 - Readers
 - Braille
- Coordinate mass care services for pets with appropriate agencies
 - Assign liaison for appropriate agencies
 - Establish contact with appropriate agencies
- Disseminate notification of cessation of mass care operations
 - Issue notice to support agencies, public, media, vendors, etc
- Demobilize Mass Care Operations
 - Deactivate staff and mass care assets
 - Salvage remaining items from mass care facilities
 - Transfer items to appropriate agencies or storage locations

B. Shelter Operations

Assignment:

Polk County Community, Family, Youth Services is the lead agency, except for Extreme Temperature Shelter operations. The Polk County Health Department is the lead agency during those operations

Activities:

Provide the overall management and coordination of temporary shelter(s) for individuals, including those with access and functional needs, displaced during an incident

Generally, Polk County does not own the buildings used for shelters. When selecting shelter locations, Polk County Emergency Management will look for buildings that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. A walk through survey will be conducted and shelters have been categorized from accessible to not at all. If no identified shelters are available and new locations have to be secured, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) shelter survey will be completed to determine accessibility. When buildings are not compliant, the Accessible Shelter Group Supervisor will work with building owners to make temporary modification to the building to accommodate those with access and functional needs.

Tasks:

- Activate and mobilize mass care personnel and resources
- Assemble mass care management teams for each identified mass care facility
- Mobilize equipment needed for access and functional needs populations
- Establish shelter operations
- Work with Assistant Safety Officer to identify possible damage and hazards in facility
- Ensure sufficient trained personnel staffing levels
- Refer individuals to skilled medical facilities if necessary
- Monitoring for potential infectious disease transmission
- Coordinate provision of shelter support services with appropriate agencies (e.g., food service, security, etc)
 - Provide health care/mental health services
 - Provide safety and security services
 - Respond to disaster welfare inquiries
 - Support family and pet-owner reunification as necessary
- Provide regular updates on shelter needs and capacity
- Request resources and equipment needed to support access and functional needs populations
 - Ensure appropriate equipment is available to fit the requirements of access and functional needs populations
 - Ensure appropriate durable medical equipment, consumable medical equipment and assistive technology is available for access and functional needs populations.

C. Registration

Assignment:

Polk County Community, Family, Youth Services
Polk County Health Department
Polk County Health Services
Red Cross volunteers
Volunteer staff from the facility being used as a shelter

Activities:

Ensure that all persons displaced by the incident are registered at the shelter.

Tasks:

- Obtain basic personal information
 - Individuals are not required to provide information about their disability, access or functional needs, but the opportunity to provide that information must be given
- An individual request for an accommodation based on disability, should be provided even if not requested during the initial intake
- Determine the presence of alcohol or drugs that may cause a safety concern for other shelter residents and/or shelter staff
- Identify any barriers to communication
- Identify any allergies
- Provide a list of information shelter residents may need, to include shelter rules
- Identify those shelter residents who are willing to volunteer for duties within the shelter
- Assist shelter residents register on the family reunification website <https://safeandwell.communityos.org>
- Monitor population levels and advise Shelter Group Supervisor on the need for additional shelters or the demobilization of existing shelters
- Give a brief orientation to shelter
- Ensure that all registration records are stored in a secure location

D. Medical Operations

Assignment:

Polk County Health Department

Activities:

Provide triage to determine medical needs, suitability for Accessible Shelter population or need for Medical Shelter. Initial triage should be conducted at the Evacuation Assembly Area before transportation. A secondary triage should be conducted at the reception site of Accessible Shelter.

Provide the overall management and coordination of medical shelter(s) for individuals displaced during an incident who have medical needs beyond the capabilities of the Accessible Shelter. Medical Shelter occupancy will vary, depending on a variety of factors including medical condition, diagnoses, shelter capabilities and staff skill levels.

If at all possible, medical sheltering will be accomplished at the Accessible Shelter. Should alternate housing be needed as determined by the Polk County Health Department the following strategies shall be followed:

- 1) Hotels/Motels
- 2) Intermediate care facilities
- 3) Long term care facilities
- 4) Extended care facilities
- 5) Residential care facilities
- 6) Skilled nursing facilities
- 7) An additional shelter focusing solely on medical care

There may be incidents where assisted living facilities, skilled care facilities or hospital occupants need to be sheltered. The establishment of a Medical Shelter should be strongly considered during these situations.

Tasks:

- Assignment of an “acuity level” to all shelter residents by public health registered nurses
- Determine the priority of patients' treatments based on the severity of their condition
- Provide basic first aid services as needed
- Obtain a brief history to include ongoing medical needs, medications and allergies
- Assess the physical condition of shelter population on an on-going basis
- Advise the Shelter Group Supervisor of any adverse change in medical condition
- Work with Human Services to provide assistance to displaced persons in obtaining their prescriptions and replacement durable medical supplies
- Ensure adequately trained staff are available to meet the needs of the shelter population, to include those with access and functional needs

D. Behavioral Health

Assignment:

Polk County Health Services

Activities:

Provide encouragement and mental health services to those affected by the event

Tasks:

- Assess immediate needs
- Provide critical incident stress debriefings
- Provide individual and group counseling
- Provide educational briefings
- Provide referrals to appropriate agencies
- Monitor shelter staff for signs and symptoms of stress reaction and/or poor coping

E. Case Management

Assignment:

Polk County Community, Family, Youth Services
Polk County Health Services
Polk County Commission on Veteran's Affairs
American Red Cross – Central Iowa Chapter
Des Moines Housing Authority
Impact Iowa
Iowa Department of Human Services
Iowa Department of Public Health – Office of Disability and Health
Jurisdiction affected building inspection department
Primary Health Care
Salvation Army
United Way of Central Iowa
Others as needed

Activities:

Iowa Code states that after the termination of the emergency or disaster, the participating government from which the evacuees come shall assume the responsibility for the ultimate support of repatriation of such evacuees. Therefore, the Case Management Unit provides human services to those impacted by an incident until insurance or longer-term public assistance programs can take over. Funds and resources should be used for the needs of individuals and families adversely affected by a disaster and every attempt should be made to ensure that persons not affected by the disaster do not take advantage of the situation and obtain services they are not entitled to.

The website <https://iowacompass.org> has an extensive listing of services and resources that may be useful in the case management process.

Tasks:

- Coordinate housing assistance for transition out of shelter
- Coordinate clothing assistance
- Coordinate food assistance
- Coordinate child/elder care
- Provide damage assessment liaison services
 - Status of residence
 - Procedure for re-entry
 - Answer questions about damage assessment process
- Coordinate personal medical aids (i.e., glasses, hearing aids, medications, dentures, mobility devices, etc.)

F. Feeding

Assignment:

Salvation Army

American Red Cross – Central Iowa Chapter

Contract services if necessary

Activities:

Provide for feeding operations

Tasks:

- Establish a beverage and snack area as soon as possible
- In coordination with the Shelter Group Supervisor, determine when the first meal will be needed
- Coordinate with the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army for support in feeding operations.
- Determine menu plan and review, when possible, with shelter residents to identify needs for feeding babies and young children
- Plan for three (3) meals per day, to include at least one (1) hot meal
- Ensure that available food meets the nutritional needs of shelter occupants, including those with access and functional needs
- Ensure that culturally appropriate foods are available
- Ensure meals are available for special dietary requirements (low sodium, low sugar)
- Consider food allergies when planning meals and snacks
- Menu selection should be based on weather conditions (hot meals in colder seasons)
- Ensure kitchen facilities, if used, are in compliance with local health regulations
- Conduct food preparations using safe food handling protocols

G. Security

Assignment:

Local law enforcement or contracted security

Activities:

Maintains the security of the staff and shelter residents

Tasks:

- Monitor parking and arrival/departure of shelter residents
- Ensure the entrance to the shelter remains clear and accessible
- Direct emergency vehicles to the appropriate locations
- Maintain order
- Assure the safety of all persons
- Ensure the building is secure
- Respond to emergencies at the shelter as needed
- Assist with the safeguarding of controlled substances/medications

H. Facilities

Assignment:

Facility owner, supported by Polk County Emergency Management

Activities:

Set up facility for sheltering operation, support ongoing operations and demobilize facility when operation is over

Tasks:

- Use temporary adaptable equipment to increase accessibility if needed
- Establish accessible parking closest to the main accessible entrance if possible. Use temporary signs, marking the first parking space van accessible with an access aisle
- Establish one accessible main entrance for the flow of shelter population into the shelter
- Establish registration area complete with tables and chairs
- Post exterior signs guiding traffic to the registration area of shelter
- Ensure that information is available in alternate formats for those with access and functional needs
 - All materials should all have the following statement printed on the material, “This material is available in alternative format upon request. Examples of people requiring alternate format are those with low to no vision and low to no hearing.”
- Post information in areas where it can be read by shelter population
- Arrange cots, blankets, pillows and other items as needed using the Polk County Mass Care trailer(s) and/or other resources
 - Medical cots should be placed on the perimeter against a wall, preventing moving or slipping for ease of transfer
 - Physical layout of cots should group individuals together based on sex or family unit
- Establish computer connectivity, printing capability, and copier access
- Establish a “quiet room” where shelter residents can go for a stress free environment
- Establish area for case management activities
- Establish food service and dining areas
- Provide containers for disposal of trash
- Provide cleaning and disinfecting services, ensuring that food areas are kept sanitary
- Provide or establish laundry services
- Arrange for the local health inspector to visit and provide recommendations if necessary
- Ensure availability of showers, arranging off-site agreements if necessary
- Provide environmental health support, including sanitation, water and waste
- Provide cleaning and disinfection of cots prior to storage
- Plan for providing an alternate source of power in the event of an outage
- Assess the need for portable accessible toilets, showers, hand-washing units
- Provide for the disposal of biohazard materials such as needles in sharps containers.
- Plan alternate sleeping areas for shift workers so the rest of shelter population is not disturbed
- Assess the need for consumable medical equipment and durable medical equipment. Request additional supplies through Logistics Section if needed

I. Transportation

Accessible transportation to the shelter and other services will be available. Resources and details of transportation functions are contained in Emergency Support Function #1 Transportation

J. Service Animals & Pets

Service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform a task to mitigate the effects of a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Most service animals are identified through special capes, harnesses, scarves or patches on leads. Others can be identified because they accompany an individual with a visible disability. Service animals do not have to be certified or specially trained. Special ID cards for service animals cannot be required. If there is question, shelter staff may ask only two questions to determine if an animal is a service animal:

- (1) "Is this a service animal required because of a disability?"
- (2) "What work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform?"

If the answers reveal that the animal has been trained to perform a task to mitigate the effects of a disability, then it is a service animal. People with access and functional needs who use service animals are not to be separated from their service animals when sheltering during an emergency, even if pets are normally prohibited in shelters.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless:

- The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it (for example, a dog that barks repeatedly)
- If the animal is not housebroken
- If the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

Service animals must be allowed in the food dining areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises. Allergies and fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals. If other shelter residents have allergies, phobias, etc. consider locating people using a service animal on the opposite side of the shelter.

Pets not otherwise addressed above are not allowed in Medical or Accessible Shelters. Resources and details of pet sheltering are contained in Emergency Support Function #11 Agriculture, Natural Resources and Pets.

VIII. Annex Development and Maintenance

Mandatory review requirements, plan distribution and voluntary review expectations are outlined within the Base Plan. At a minimum this annex will be reviewed and revised every five (5) years. Revisions may also occur at any time based on input from primary and support agencies or when corrective actions are identified by an after action report following an incident.